



# The Weekly Page

VOLUME 8 ISSUE 3

JANUARY 27, 2012

## Pages Learn About Legislature



### Big ideas in government

Throughout the week pages grappled with understanding the three “big ideas” for a representative government: governing is a complex process, successful democracies rely on responsible citizens, and government affects our life every day. As they participated in daily discussions, listened to guest speakers, and proposed bills in mock committee hearings, their understanding around the concepts deepened. On Friday, they wrote about one of the big ideas to demonstrate the depth of their new knowledge.

### Rep proposes later school start time

Olympia – Yesterday, Representative Miles Hawley introduced House Bill 2395, which addresses the issue of sleep deprived teens. “The bill is a good one because it will improve our students’ academic performance and keep teens healthy and safe,” said Rep. Hawley. Teenagers on average need 8-9 hours of sleep a day, but 85 percent of teens get less than that per night. Sleep deprivation impairs the ability to pay attention, creativity, communication, abstract thinking, problem solving, innovation, decision making, mood and motivation. In addition, 100,000 motor vehicle crashes each year are caused by fatigued



drivers, and over half of these drivers are between the ages of 16-25. “The natural tendency for teenagers is to stay up late at night and wake up later in the morning; their biological clock is set differently than an adult or child. So, even if they did try to go to bed earlier, their bodies would force them to stay up until midnight,” said Rep. Hawley. If this bill becomes law, all public high schools will begin no earlier than 8 a.m.. “In places where this has happened, there have been improvements in attendance and enrollment rates, increased day time alertness, and decreased depression.”

### Pages write bills, hold mock hearings

Pages worked individually or in small groups to write bills designed to address issues which were relevant to them and the state. Criteria for making a legislative solution work was discussed before students selected issues to research and develop. Then they used bill templates on class computers to formulate official-looking documents in preparation for a mock committee hearing on Thursday. Some topics for policy bills included smoking in cars, abandoned animals, taxes, sleep-deprived teens and abortion. Pages read their bills and “committee members,” governed by the rules of parliamentary procedure, debated the pros and cons of the proposals. A “DO PASS” or “DO NOT PASS” recommendation was then voted upon, allowing a bill to continue on in the legislative process. As in the real political system, some bills died in committee.

Watch us live at [TVW.org](http://TVW.org)

## Young hunters need supervision

Olympia – House Bill 2424 was introduced yesterday by Representative Taylor Mathis. “This bill addresses the issue of inexperienced hunters and will result in safer forests,” said Rep.



Mathis. Hikers and hunters often use the same trails during hunting season. In 2008, the second day of bear-hunting season ended in tragedy on a marked trail in the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest when a 14-year-old boy and his 16-year-old brother accidentally shot and killed a hiker only 120 yards away. “We need more safety precautions to ensure this doesn’t happen again,” said Rep. Mathis. This law would require hunters to be at least 18 years old. Currently, Washington has no minimum hunting age. “Younger hunters would be able to hunt, but they must have an adult with at least two years of experience accompanying them into the woods,” said Rep. Mathis.

## While adults smoke, kids choke



Olympia – Senate Bill 6969 was introduced yesterday by Senator Tanner Trakel. “This bill addresses the issue of smoking in cars and will protect minor passengers from second- hand smoke from adult drivers,” said Sen. Trakel. Studies in California show that second- hand smoke in a car is 30 times stronger than the level of an unhealthy air alert. Many diseases such as lung and heart disease, as

well as asthma, are caused by smoking. “Kids do not have the voice to tell the parent to put out the cigarette,” said Sen Trakel. This bill will prohibit smoking in a vehicle with minors on board. This will begin as a secondary offence to start with, according to the senator, and the fine will be \$275 for violators.

## Reps drive home unique DUI penalty

Olympia – House Bill 3591 was introduced yesterday by Representatives William Clem, Douglas Cowdrey, and Mary Hlavacka. “This bill addresses the issue of drunk driving and will save many innocent lives,” said Rep. Hlavacka. A 2009 report shows that of all the fatal driving accidents between 1982 and 2009, 40-64% percent were caused by drivers with a blood

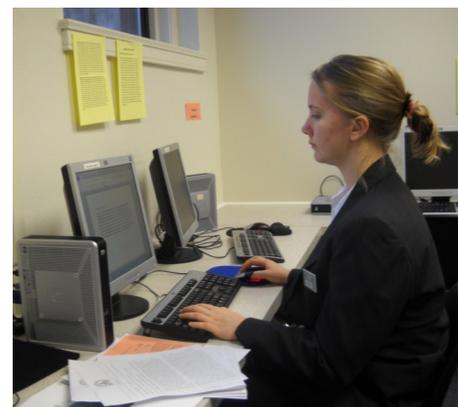
alcohol content (BAC) that was 0.08 or higher, which is the minimum rate for a drunk driver. If this bill becomes law, anyone who has had two DUIs within a one-year span will be required to place yellow license plates on all vehicles registered in his or her name for two years, indicating that they could be a potential hazard on the highway. If there is a third DUI they will go to prison.



## Sleep deprivation in teens is a wake-up call for legislators

Olympia – House Bill 2318 was introduced yesterday by Representative Virginia Phelps. “This bill addresses the issue of sleep deprivation in teens, and will delay high school start times to accommodate the natural sleep rhythms of students,” said Rep. Phelps. Studies have shown that teens sleep later and wake up later than children or adults because of a shift in their circadian rhythms during puberty. Early school start times force teens to wake up and go to sleep earlier than their bodies want to. Teens who do not get enough sleep are irritable, have difficulty focusing in school, and experience more depression. Adolescents require 8 ½ to 9 ¼ hours of sleep per night, however, 85 percent of teens get less than that. This bill proposes that high schools start classes no earlier than 8 a.m. “The benefits of this change are measurable.

Schools that have already implemented a later start time found a rise in overall grades, and teachers report that their students are more alert and ready to learn,” said Rep. Phelps.



## Page School on the web

The Page School has its own web site. You can find us at:

<http://www.leg.wa.gov/PageSchool>

This newsletter has been posted there.

### Senator Amara wants drunks off the road



Olympia – Senate Bill 7777 was introduced yesterday by Senator Jattu Amara in the Transportation Committee. “This bill ad-

addresses the issue of drunk drivers and will get them off the roads and keep everyone safe,” said Sen. Amara. Drunk drivers kill about 13,000 Americans each year and injure hundreds of thousands more. In 2009, there were 492 fatal traffic accidents in Washington State; 232 were alcohol related. Impaired driving is often a repeated offence. Research shows that 1/3 of people convicted for DUI will be arrested again within three years. If this bill becomes law, ignition interlock devices (IID) will be required to be installed in cars of anyone convicted a second time of drunk driving." In some states that have this law they have decreased the repeat offences by more than 50 percent," said Sen. Amara. Most devices cost \$100-200 to install with a monthly rental fee of \$70-100. The drunk driver will have to pay for all costs. The device will stay on the car for one year.

### Anti-abortion lawmakers propose heart-beat requirement



Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Marissa Owens, Victoria Steinbrecher, and Erik Straume introduced

Senate Bill 5500, which addresses the issue of abortion. “The bill is a good one because it will protect many unborn children,” said Sen. Owens. In 2008, 1.21 million abortions were performed in the United States. Currently, Washington State has one of the most liberal abortion policies in America. In order to encourage pregnant women to choose life for their babies, this bill would require a prospective mother to have an ultrasound and see and hear the heartbeat of her child before making a decision to abort. Hundreds of thousands of women have changed their minds about the procedure after hearing the

baby's heartbeat in states where this requirement is in effect, according to the senators.

### Counties to license MJ dispensaries

Olympia—Senate Bill 7778 was introduced yesterday in the Health and Long-Term Care Committee by Senator Niles Haas. “This bill addresses the issue of medical marijuana and will make it easier for patients to obtain cannabis for their medical condition,” said Sen. Haas. Currently, a patient is allowed a 60-day supply of 24 oz. and 15 marijuana plants. Cannabis has been proven to be a valuable resource for people with terminal illnesses or chronic pain, according to the senator. The problem is that some patients do not know how to grow the plant or can’t find someone to grow it for them. If this bill becomes law, counties will be authorized to regulate and license dispensaries for the sale of medical marijuana to those patients with legitimate prescriptions from a doctor. “It will be up to the individual counties to decide whether they want to provide the service,” said Sen. Haas.

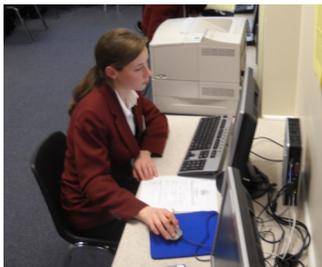


### Page program over 100 years old

The Legislative page program has been in existence since 1891. This photo is of pages who served in past years. The first female page served in 1937. In the past, pages were required to do ironing and cleaning for members. Page duties today are much more professional and include delivering campus correspondence, helping with mailings in legislative offices, and handing out documents on the floor of the Senate and House.



## Legislature cracks down on abortion



Olympia – Yesterday, Senator Rosemary Harris introduced Senate Bill 6982, which addresses the issue of abortion. “The bill is a good one because it will reduce the number of abortions in our state,” said Sen. Harris. In 2009, 23,738 abortions took place in

Washington. Scientific research has shown that there is a link between having an abortion and getting breast cancer, according to the senator. The procedure can also cause negative psychological problems, such as depression and suicidal thoughts, for mothers who go through an abortion. “Babies in the womb can feel pain and suffer during the abortion,” said Sen. Harris. This bill will require that all pregnant women who choose abortion rather than carrying their baby to full-term receive counseling about the negative physical and psychological effects of the procedure. This will include showing them a video of the operation that will be performed on them. They must also have an ultrasound so they can see the fetus. Females under the age of 18 must obtain parental consent before an abortion. The bill will not require extra funding since the counseling will come from the doctors that the women are already seeing.

## Senator hopes to eliminate EBT fraud

Olympia – Yesterday, Senator Tim Kosaka introduced Senate Bill SB 5327, which addresses the issue of EBT fraud. “The bill is a good one because it will save millions of dollars for the state, yet allow those in need to continue to support themselves and their families,” said Sen. Kosaka. The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program gives needy families money for basic needs by issuing monthly Electronic Benefit Transaction (EBT) cards. However, some people have continuously used these cards for other purposes, such as cashing the cards at casinos in order to gamble. There were 20,000 withdrawals from EBT cards at ATM machines in casinos in 2009 that totaled nearly \$2 million. In addition, cards have



turned up on Craigslist where recipients were selling them for cash and then reporting the cards lost.

“Currently the state gives replacement cards on the spot with no questions asked,” said Sen. Kosaka. This bill intends to reduce the fraud associated with the EBT cards. Cards may not be used at taverns, beer/wine specialty stores, nightclubs, contract

liquor stores, bail bond agencies, gambling establishments, tattoo/body piercing/body art shops, or any establishments where persons under the age of 18 are not permitted. Compliance with the law will reside with the companies and businesses. Replacement cards will not be issued for the full amount. The first replacement in a month receives 75 percent of the full value; the second replacement in that month receives only 50 percent.

## Reps want to protect climate from cars

Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Matthew Repplier and Luke Stuart introduced House Bill 1357, which addresses the issue of climate change. “The bill is a good one because it reduces car emissions to protect our environment,” said Rep.



Repplier. Our state's cars dump 148 trillion gallons of pollutants into the air every year. Continued pollution endangers the lives of Washington citizens, according to Rep. Stuart. The hazards include reducing resistance to colds and other infections, reducing the ability of blood to bring oxygen to important parts of the body, damaged lungs and bronchitis. HB1357 requires statewide carbon emission testing for all cars every two years. Currently only 13 counties require the tests. “We all need to do our part to help protect the environment,” said Rep. Stuart.

## Senator advocates new packaging regulations on “natural” foods



Olympia – Senate Bill 5555 was introduced yesterday by Senator Zack Matthews. “This bill addresses the issue of food additives and will improve the health of countless Washingtonians,” said Sen. Matthews. The top four ingredients added to foods are trans fats, refined grains, salt and high fructose corn syrup. These elements lead to complications that can result in premature deaths,

such as obesity, high blood pressure, insulin resistance, and belly fat. Recent reports find that between 30,000 and 100,000 premature deaths occur in Americans every year. “While we can’t control what food producers in other states add to their goods, we can control those that are produced in our state,” said Sen. Matthews. This bill will outlaw the use of the term “natural” on product containers that have added flavor enhancers or the four other additives mentioned.

## Unborn children need protecting



Olympia – House Bill 3998 was introduced yesterday by Representative Abigail Asplund. “This bill addresses the issue of abortion and will reduce them significantly.” In 2002, approximately 86,000 women had abortions in the United States. “Women who don’t want their lives disrupted by having a child or those that don’t feel

mature enough to raise a child, should begin thinking more about the child than themselves,” she said. “There are a lot of families who would love to take on the responsibility of raising a child through adoption.” This bill will require teens under the age of 18 to give parents notification of the abortion choice, and any woman, regardless of age, must attend at least two counseling sessions before the abortion takes place and at least two afterward. “This will better prepare them for making the choice to abort the fetus, as well as helping them cope with the long-lasting trauma of the procedure.”

## Less costly form of execution proposed

Olympia – Senate Bill 6006 was introduced yesterday by Senators River Wilson and Alex Wade. “This bill addresses the issue of costly death row executions and will change the current method of lethal injection or hanging to death by shooting,”



said Sen. Wilson. It is estimated that the average execution costs approximately \$750,000. An additional \$100,000 is spent in preparation for the event. If this bill becomes law, the legislature will authorize prisons that house death row inmates to purchase hand guns, which cost about \$300 each, to be used by one person to fire one round into the brain of the inmate from close range. “This will be painless, instant, and inexpensive,” said Sen. Wade. The senators estimate that the cost of the one bullet would be approximately five cents.

## Smoking in cars to be extinguished

Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Liz Fredrickson, Renee Chaffin, and Cassandra Adams introduced Senate Bill 6688, which addresses the issue of smoking in cars. “The bill is a good one because it will prevent secondhand smoke from damaging the



health of minors when they are passengers in a car,” said Sen. Fredrickson. According to a recent news article, air pollution in smokers' cars can reach levels nearly ten times the hazardous levels set by the Environmental Protection Agency. “When children are exposed to secondhand smoke, which contains more than 250 chemicals, it is almost as if they were smoking themselves,” said Sen. Chaffin. Currently, the state requires that foster children not be exposed to secondhand smoke within motor vehicles because of the association with various medical conditions such as lung disease, heart disease, asthma, and ear infections. Not only is secondhand smoke linked to these conditions, it has also been known to increase the risk of sudden infant death syndrome. If this bill becomes law, smoking in vehicles where children are present will be banned. If someone violates this policy, he or she will be fined \$250. “This law will begin as a secondary offence in order to give adults time to change their behavior,” said Sen. Adams. Jail time will be the punishment for violators after the law changes to a primary law and they have three convictions.

## Lawmaker wants to ban sports with high head injury risks

Olympia—Senator Andy Beal introduced Senate Bill 6667 yesterday in the Early Learning & K-12 Education committee. The bill addresses the issue of increasing concussion in high school sports and attempts to eliminate the problem. Studies show that one in 10 football players sustain head injuries bad enough to take them out of the game. This bill bans all sports like football and wrestling in public junior and high schools until better protective head gear is produced.



## Millionaires to share the burden



Olympia – Senate Bill 7654 was introduced yesterday by Senator Benton Colblentz. “This bill addresses the issue of Washington’s tax structure and will prevent the continuation of the unfair treatment of most state citizens due to our regressive tax policy,” said Sen. Colblentz. A recent report by the Washington, D.C.-based Institute for Taxation and Economic Policy found that Wash-

ington has the most regressive tax system in the United States, according to the senator. “People earning less than \$20,000 annually pay over 14 percent more in taxes than those in the top one percent of income earners, those earning more than \$537,000 per year,” he said. It is no secret that the state does not raise enough revenue to pay for many of its provided services. “The current tax structure affects most deeply the one in five people who are at or below the poverty line. This is too high of a percentage, and they must not be faced with any more difficulties than they already do.” The bill adds a 10 percent income tax on the personal incomes of those who make over \$1 million. Only the income over the \$1 million is taxed. “Those who earn more will pay their fair share. The 20 percent of citizens in our state who live at or below the poverty line will no longer carry the burden they have in the past,” said Sen. Colblentz.

## Pet food manufacturers asked to help animal shelters



Olympia – House Bill 1997 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Katelyn Reicks-Halter and Kylee Norton. “This bill addresses the issue of abandoned animals and will motivate more families to adopt pets,” said Rep. Reicks-Halter. Ap-

proximately 5-7 million companion animals enter animal shelters nationwide every year, and approximately 3-4 million are euthanized, or destroyed. Five out of 10 dogs in shelters and seven out of 10 cats in shelters are destroyed simply because there is no one to adopt them. This bill hopes to motivate more families to adopt shelter animals by giving a 2-month supply of pet food with every adoption. “It costs between \$700-875 per year for food, supplies, medical care and training for an animal. Many people won’t take on that responsibility,” said Rep. Nor-

ton. Pet food manufacturers will be encouraged to donate their products to the shelters in return for a tax break. If the manufacturers will give 2 percent of their product to the shelters, they can deduct 2 percent of their business tax bill.

## Guest speakers visit Page School

Michelle Meaker-Pin, legislative assistant to Rep. Luis Moscoso (D-1st); Senator Andy Hill (R-45th); and Mary Selecky, Director of the Department of Health, joined the pages during classes on Wednesday. Each spoke about what led them to their current positions and shared insightful information in regard to their contribution to state government. Pages were able to interact with the guests, asking questions and sharing their own views in response to the speakers’ questions.



## Students wake up later

Olympia – House Bill 2846 was introduced yesterday by Senators Carolina Watts, Haley Sund, and Anne TePaske. “This bill addresses the issue of teen sleep deprivation and will push back school starting times to a minimum of eight o’clock to raise student’s grades,” said Sen. Watts. Many teenagers are sleep deprived, which can cause health problems and interfere with learning. Research shows that teenagers are biologically programmed to stay up late and wake up late. This is because during puberty a teen’s body produces melatonin which changes the rhythms that change the person’s sleep and wake cycle. Disadvantages for teens that do not get enough sleep can be depressed moods, likelihood for tardiness, bad grades, falling asleep while operating a vehicle, and risk of metabolic and nutritional deficits, including obesity.

